RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 18th March, 1999/
27th Phalguna, 1920 (Saka)

The House met at Eleven of the clock, **Mr. Chairman** *in the Chair.*

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Reduction in Retirement Age

321. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI : Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state :

(a) whethher Government have received any proposal from ONGC Board regarding reducing retirement age of its employees from 60 years to 58 years;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering the proposal for approval;

(c) whether Government have received such proposals from other Undertakings/Enterprises of Ministry of Petroleum; and

(d) if so, the name of the Undertaking and action being taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

A proposal for reducing the age of retirment from 60 years to 58 years of employees of ONGC below Board level and for taking a view in respect of Board level appointees has been received from ONGC. No such proposals have been received from other Public Sector Companies under the administrative control of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. ONGC Ltd.'s proposal is under examination.

श्री खान गुफरान ज़ाहिदी : मान्यवर, आपके माध्यम से मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से कहना चाहता हूं कि ओ॰एन॰जी॰सी॰ एक ऐसा इदारा है, एक ऐसी एजेंसी है, एक ऐसा इस्टेब्लिशमेंट है जिस पर मुल्क का फाइनैंस, एग्रीकल्चर, इंडस्ट्री, सब कुछ निर्भर करता है। गवर्नमेंट आफ इंडिया ने 13 मई, 1998 को फैसला लिया कि हम रिटायरमेंट की ऐज 58 से 60 बरस का देंगे सरकारी मुलाज़िमों के लिए। डिपार्टमेंट आफ पब्लिक अंडरटेकिंग, जो इंडस्ट्री, मिनिस्ट्री में है, उसने भी इसको ऐक्सेप्ट किया और 240 के करीब जो आपके पब्लिक अंडरटेकिंग्स हैं, उनमें इसको लागू करने का एक फैसला किया गया और 23 जून, 1998 को उन्होंने मंजूर कर लिया कि रिटायरमेंट के लिए 58 से 60 बरस की ऐज को हम कुबूल करते हैं, सबने मान लिया। लेकिन ओ॰एन॰जी॰सी॰ में 8 महीने के बाद एकाएक बोर्ड का फैसला हुआ और यह ऐसा कॉमिक रिलीफ है नेशन के लिए, हम हंसे बिना नहीं रह सकते। कॉमिक रिलीफ इसलिए है कि 60 बरस गवर्नमेंट आफ इंडिया ने कर लिया है, 240 पब्लिक अंडरटेकिंग्स ने भी कर दिया लेकिन इन्होंने एक दिन रेज़ोल्यूशन पास कर दिया और कहा कि हम 58 बरस ही रखेंगे। पांचवें वेतन आयोग की रिपोर्ट में इस बारे में कहा गया था कि चूंकि लाइफ स्पैन बढ़ गया है; हेल्थ की कंडीशंस बढ़ गई हैं, शादियां लेट हो रही हैं और सारी दुनिया में अब 60 बरस की ऐज रिटायरमेंट के लिए हो रही है, इसलिए हम 60 बरस करते हैं और इससे बचत भी होगी डिपार्टमेंट में क्योंकि पांच हज़ार करोड़ का फौरी पैसा अदा नहीं करना पड़ेगा, इसलिए बचत हो जाएगी। हमारा कहना है, ठीक है, आप 58 बरस कर रहे थे, मुझे कोई ऐतराज़ नहीं है, लेकिन मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूं कि यह जो रेज़ोल्यूशन आया और आज तक इसकी मंजूरी नहीं हुई है और सैक्रेटरी, मि॰ विजय, कह रहे हैं कि साहब हो जाना चाहिए, तो क्यों आपके यहां से 58 बरस का रेज़ोल्यूशन आया? आपने एक फैसला कर लिया कि 58 बरस के बाद हम रिटायर कर देंगे लेकिन दो साल तक आप तनख्वाह भी देंगे, डी॰ए॰ भी देंगे और काम भी नहीं लेंगे और इस तरह से इसमें से 2200 अफसर रिटायर हो रहे हैं और 600 आदमी और रिटायर हो रहे हैं। सवाल यह है माननीय मंत्री जी से कि मंत्री ने अपने जवाब में बिल्कुल नाकाफी इत्तिला दी है, हमारे जो सप्लीमेंटरी हैं, उनका कोई जवाब नहीं दिया है और यह भी नहीं बताया है कि वे इसको कुबूल करने जा रहे हैं या नहीं, उन्होंने कोई ऐसा जवाब नहीं दिया है? मैं सिर्फ यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि क्या मंत्री जी बताने की कोशिश करेंगे कि ओ॰एन॰जी॰सी॰, जो आपके अंडर में है, क्या उसमें 100-125 आदमियों को हाल में भर्ती किया गया है डी॰ जी॰ और जी॰एम॰ लेवल पर और इधर से अपने ओरिजनल मुलाज़िमों को रिटायर किया गया है, क्या ऐसा है? यह मेरा पहला सप्लीमेंटरी है।

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Hon. Chairman, Sir, this Government took a decision to increase the retirement age from 58 to 60. The decision is also applicable to all public sector undertakings. This is a Cabinet decision. It is true that the ONGC in its Board

meeting on 22.1.1999 has passed a resolution for reverting to the retirement age of 58. Normally, these decisions are to be analysed and approved by the Ministry. Then only the individual board's resolutions can be implemented by respective public sector undertakings. Accordingly, they have sent it to us. As far as we are concerned, we have sent this resolution, with our comments, to the Department of Public Enterprises and also to the Department of Personnel for their opinion only. Sir, here I would like to reiterate that no resolution or any such thing has been passed by any of the public sector undertakings under this Ministry, except the ONGC. As far as the Ministry is concerned, we will go by the Cabinet decision only, but we are waiting for the opinion of the Department of Personnel.

श्री खान गुफरान ज़ाहिदी: सभापति महोदय, मेरे पहले प्रश्न का दूसरा पार्ट यह है कि ....(व्यवधान)

श्री सभापति: दूसरा पार्ट नहीं, दूसरा सप्लीमेंटरी पूछिए। पार्ट्स में सवाल नहीं पूछे जाते हैं, आप तो जानते हैं, आप पुराने मेंबर हैं।

श्री खान गुफरान ज़ाहिदी: सभापति महोदय, 42,000 मुलाज़िम इसमें काम कर रहे हैं। मान्यवर, जब 58 साल से 60 साल करने का फैसला किया गया तो कुछ लोगों की सर्विस का एक्सटेंशन हुआ। यह 8 महीने पुरानी बात है। माननीय प्रधानमंत्री जी यहां बैठे हैं, मैं उनसे निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि एक सुबह वे लोग उठे और कहा कि फिर से हमने रिटायरमेंट ऐज 58 साल कर दी है। यही नहीं वहां वालंटियरी रिटायरमेंट स्कीम लागू करने की भी बात है, जिसे सरकार अच्छा समझती है, वहां पर 2,600 आदमियों पर यह लागू करने की बात है जिसमें से 2,200 आदमी सीनियर अफसर हैं। महोदय, अगर इत्तफाक से यह स्कीम मान ली जाए, 58 साल में रिटायरमेंट वाली तो चेयरमैन, मैनेजिंग डॉयरेक्टर और 6 में से 3 डॉयरेक्टर, ये सब रिटायर हो जाएंगे और इतने सारे सीनियर अफसरों का एकदम से रिटायरमेंट हो जाएगा।

महोदय, जो हमारे यहां प्लानिंग होती है, सक्ससर प्लानिंग, वह यहां कहीं दिखाई नहीं देती। इतना बड़ा ओ. एन.जी.सी. है, खुदा-ना-खास्ता कोई तबाही आ जाए, जैसे अभी बंबई में हुआ है, लाखों- करोड़ों रुपए का नुकसान हो गया है। मैं आपसे कह रहा हूं कि पूरे मुल्क का डिफेंस, इंडस्ट्री, सब तबाह होने जा रहा है। आपने 2,200 सीनियर अफसरों का रिटायरमेंट कर दिया। हम जानते हैं कि आप एक करोड़ नवयुवकों को रोजगार देने की बात कर रहे हैं। मेरा सवाल यह है कि आप 58 साल और 60 साल, इस बीच के फैसले को एकतरफा फैसला करने में कितना टाईम लगाएंगे? आपने अभी कहा कि हम 60 साल ही रखेंगे। तो क्या इस बात की एनाउंसमेंट आप करने जा रहे हैं? क्या आप ओ.एन.जी.सी. को इसकी इत्तिला देने जा रहे हैं? आप यह इत्तिला कब तक देने जा रहे हैं? ओ.एन.जी.सी. के सीनियर अफसरों के साथ जिस तरह का व्यवहार हो रहा है, कोई मैनेजमेंट आपका नहीं है, क्या आप कोई ऐसा फैसला करने जा रहे हैं जिससे आप इस मुसीबत से निकल सकें?

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have reiterated our commitment with regard to the Cabinet decision about retirement age, which has been increased from 58 years to 60 years. Sir, we have to give some kind of freedom to the Boards. On whatever they think, they can, at their behest, pass a resolution, but it is finally approved by the Ministry. Sir, I have already informed the hon. Member that after this Cabinet decision, our Ministry had asked all the public undertakings under our Ministry to increase the retirement age from 58 years to 60 years, Except the ONGC, all other companies have fallen in lien with that Cabinet decision. The ONGC also has not violated it, but they have expressed their opinion through a resolution. For eliciting the opinion of the Department of Personnel, I have sent it to them. But, as far as the Ministry is concerned, we are committed to increasing the retirement age from 58 years to 60 years.

श्री खान गुफरान जाहिदी: मान्यवर, एक सवाल मैं पूछना चाहता हूं जो बहुत महत्वपुर्ण ...(व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: No , no. You have already put two supplementaries. Shri Gopalsinh G. Solanki.

SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Sir, with the awareness of health, longevity increases like anything. In the case of Japan, it is 86 years and 89 years, for male and female, respectively. In the case of India, it is 64 years and 67 years. So, instead of decreasing the retirement age, it should be increased. I want to know whether the Government is thinking in terms of increasing the retirement age from 60 years to 62 years because, in the case of Supeme Court judges, it is alredy 62 years. There must be some uniform increase, and, it needs to be! Therefore, I would like to know from the

Government whether it is in the mind of the Government so far as the increasing of retirement age is concerned.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not think I could read the mind of the Government. Whatever decision we have taken for increasing it from 58 to 60 years, is already a controversial one. Even some of the parties are criticising it. The unions are coming out with some comments and other things. As on date, the extension of retirement age from 58 to 60 stands.

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Mr. Chaiman, Sir, this age-limit was increased from 58 to 60 years by a Cabinet decision and an executive order was issued by the Government imposing it on all Government offices and Central public sector undertakings. All the public sector undertaking are bound by the directive of the Government. They cannot take their own decision because a policy decision is dictated by the Government of India. The public setor undertakinngs, after taking this decision, are reverting back to 58 years because there is a pronouncement from the Ruling Party saying that they want to reduce the retiremennt age to 58 years. Air India has also done the same thing. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will see to it that a directive is issued to the public sector undertakings to adhere to the order issued by the government earlier and not to pass resolutions in the boards without the consent of the Government. You cannot have double standards.

SHRI K. RAMANURTHY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is true that Air India has passed a resoultion for reducing the retirement age from 60 to 58 years. Sir, we cannot deny functional autonomy to the Boards. As I have reiterated earlier, we have already sent a directive to all the public sector undertakings under this Ministry. I have also conveyed that, except the ONGC, no other undertaking has passed any such resolution like this. In this case also, I have reiterated that our Ministry will go with the Cabinet decision, the Government decision, and nothing more than that. I have said that this matter has been referred to the Department of Personnel for its opinion. Sir, recently it has been published the newspapers that the Ruling Party is advocating for reducing the age of retirement from 60 to 58 years. If this is so, then why should we raise it to 60 years? That is not correct. This has because a highly discussable point and so many people have raised this issue. If here and there any public sector undertaking passes a resolution, it does not mean that the Government is thinking of reducing the retirement age from 60 to 58 years.

SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Sir, I would like to know whether this is one of the recommendations made by the 5th Pay Commission. If this is so, the Cabinet must take a decision on it. The hon. Minister has just now mentioned that they have sent it for the opinion of the Department of Personnel. I would like to know whether the Government did not seek the opinion of the Department of Personnel before implementing this decision of the Cabinet. In his reply the hon. Minister has said that the decision of ONGC is being sent to the Department of Personnel for its opinion. I would also like to know whether it is a decision of the Cabinet or it is a recommendation made by the 5th Pay Commission.

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Sir, the enhancement of retirement age is one of the recommendations of the 5th Pay Commission. Sir, the Cabinet note was mooted by the Department of Personnel with regard to increasing the retirement age form 58 to 60 years. Hence we are bound to refer this matter for the opinion of that Department.

प्रो रामगोपाल यादव: सर, जब 58 वर्ष से सुपरएनुयेशन ऐज 60 वर्ष की गई थी तब आम लोगों में यह चर्चा थी कि हिन्दुस्तान के कुछ टाप ब्यूरोक्रेटस हैं जिन्होंने दो वर्ष और अपने पदों पर बने रहने के लिए इस तरह का कदम उठाने के लिए केन्द्रीय मंत्रिमंडल को राजी किया है। इसमें जो एक नुकसानदेह बात हुई वह यह है कि हजारों नये लोग जो रोजगार पाने वाले थे वह दो वर्ष के लिए रोजगार से वंचित हुए हैं। इससे भी ज्यादा खराब बात यह थी कि जो रिजर्व पोस्ट थीं, जिन आरक्षित पदों पर लोग आने वाले थे, खासतौर पर जो पहले से आरक्षण चला आ रहा था, उन पर लोग नहीं आ सके। जो ओ.बी.सी. के लिए आरक्षण हुआ था उसमें कुछ लोगों का और आम लोगों का यह मानना है कि हजारों लोग इस वर्ग से जो इन दो वर्षों में आ जाते उनको भी नौकरी से वंचित किया गया

है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या उन्हें भी इस बात का अहसास है कि 58 वर्ष से 60 वर्ष की उम्र करने से बैकवर्ड क्लासेज, ओ.बी.सी. के तमाम लोगों के हकों पर कुठाराघात हुआ है? जबकि इस समय रोजगार सबसे महत्वपूर्ण समस्या है और इसके जरिए हजारों लोगों को रोजगार से वंचित किया गया है। मैं यह भी पूछना चाहता हूं कि क्या गवर्नमेंट 60 वर्ष से फिर 58 वर्ष की उम्र रिटायरमेंट की करने पर विचार करेगी?

SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY: Hon. Chairman, Sir, whatever points-about OBCs, reduction in employment, etc, are raised by the hon. member these have been discussed threadbare in the Cabinet. It is only after that, this decision has been taken.

Governance through Committees

*322. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Committees (with names) that have been constituted by Government with the objective of better governance;

(b) how many of these Committees are functioning at present and which are without any assigned work; and

(c) how many Committees proposed to be set up are yet to be constituted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) to (c) "Better Governance" is a Multi-faceted concept encompassing various aspects including a responsive, transparent, acountable and efficient administration. The Govenment has taken several measures from time to time improve the functioning of the administration. After the Administrative Reforms Commission which functioned during 1966 to 1970, the Government has not constituted any Committee with the objective of covering the entire gamut of "Better Governance", nor is there any such proposal presentaly under consideration.

However, the Commission on Review of Administrative Laws, which was constituted in May, 1998, submitted its report on 30th September, 1998. The recommendations of the Commission have addressed various issues including amendments to repeal of identified laws as well as simplification, documentation and harmonisation of laws. Copies of the Report of the Commissionn have been sent to all Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and State/Union Teritory Governments in November, 1998 for examination and for devising suitable action plans for implementaion of the recommendaitons.

SHRI SANATAN BISI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the present Government, under the leadership of Shri Vajpayee, first constituted a task force. Thereafter, the National Security Council was constituted; then a National Task Force on Information Technology and another one on the development of I.T. industry, were constituted. Again a National Task Force on I.T. and another one on infrastructure, under the Chairmanship of the Minister of externnal Affairs, were constituted; again, another Committee was constituted for software industry followed by another Committee for hardware industry. The Prime Minister, again, has constituted and inter-ministerial panel to vet the recommendations of the task force on hardware industry. On infrastructure, Mr. Chairman, Sir, one more task force was constituted to look into the provisions relating to the setting up of five international airports. Under the same infrastructure, a group on telecommunications (GOT) was constituted to draw up a new telecom policy. Sir, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Committee is different. There is another council called, the Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Trade and Industry. In the Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Trade and Industry, there are six working groups. I wanted to know from the hon. Prime Minister whether all these things are not overlapping.

SHRI R. JANARTHANA: Sir, the question is about better governance. We have constituted a Commission on Review of Administrative Laws which will take care of all the previous Committees. The question is pertaining to better governance of the Government ...(*Interruptions*)..